Though many of the things they do on the show are not accurate, and the timelines are skewed, the true capabilities of the KSP forensic laboratories have transformed over the past decade, allowing some of what is seen on TV to be reality.

Likewise, the training offered for law enforcement officers in the field of crime-scene investigations has risen to meet the expectation — equipping Kentucky officers with the skills necessary to keep pace with what their communities have grown to expect.

In 2007, DOCJT launched the Kentucky Criminalistics Academy in an effort to thoroughly train new crime scene investigators so they could hit the streets running, instead of learning slowly over the span of a 10-, 15- or 20-year career. At its inception, the KCA was a 10-week, 400-hour training course consisting of lectures and practical exercises, covering numerous topics related to CSI work. KCA training covers:

- Digital photography
- Advance latent print development
- Evidence collection and documentation
- Arson investigation
- Shooting reconstruction
- Bloodstain pattern recognition
- Post blast investigation
- Forensic mapping and computer crimes investigation.

Beginning next spring, the KCA will be offered as two five-week courses, allowing DOCJT to provide advanced forensic training to a broader law enforcement audience without sacrificing the quality of training.

In 2008, legislation made it mandatory to obtain a DNA sample from every convicted felon. These DNA profiles are put into a DNA database and can be used as a source to link known offenders to unsolved cases. >>

PHOTO BY ELIZABETH THOMAS

▲ Advancements in forensic capabilities, such as DNA processing, over the past decade have added a new dimension to law enforcement investigations across the commonwealth.

'06

AMISH SCHOOL SHOOTING

A milk truck driver carrying three guns and a childhood grudge stormed a one-room Amish schoolhouse. He sent the boys and adults outside, barricaded the doors with wood planks and opened fire on a dozen girls, killing three people before committing suicide.